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ALBANIA

FACT SHEET

Rule of Law

LEGAL SYSTEMS THAT BETTER SUPPORT DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES AND MARKET REFORMS



The Citizen Advocacy Office (CAO) poster urges Albanians not to trade their rights for money. Its 24-hour hotline can be used to report instances of corruption.

PROJECTS

- Albania Rule of Law Project (July 2004-June 2007)
- Women's Legal Rights Initiative (Nov. 2003-May 2007)

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CURRENT SITUATION

Despite progress to date, the judiciary in Albania remains weak overall. A lack of will on the part of political leaders and the bureaucracy to advance reform has hindered the implementation of the judicial sector laws enacted over the past decade. Many officials and governmental agencies simply do not have procedures and systems in place to make legal reform meaningful. Corruption remains the most significant impediment to good governance and rule of law. According to Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, the country's global rank has deteriorated as its overall, low index score has stagnated. However, there is an opportunity to improve this situation as the winning party after the election has made the fight against corruption as a centerpiece of its platform. The citizenry is also better positioned to demand more efficient government services and denounce corruption.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

USAID/Albania's Rule of Law program aims at reducing corruption by providing targeted assistance to both Albanian institutions as well as nongovernmental organizations. On the government side, the program focuses on bolstering judicial and other government institutions with audit authority, thereby enforcing laws specifically intended to deter or reduce corrupt practices. On the nongovernmental side, the program forces greater government accountability and transparency through its support to nongovernmental "watchdogs" and associations. An ancillary part of the program focuses on the rights and treatment of women in Albania's legal and judicial system, providing legal protections for women and training for judges.

PROGRAM FOCUS

- Improving the professional and ethical performance of the judiciary and other government institutions;
- Mobilizing citizens to demand accountability and transparency;
- Promoting public awareness and education, as well as providing training to judges, on issues of anti-trafficking, domestic violence, and the new family code.

SUCCESSES

- Initial implementation of Asset Disclosure Law;
- Parliamentary approval of the Law on the Conflict of Interest;
- The National Chamber of Advocates has taken important steps towards disciplining its own rows of corrupt lawyers by issuing a Code of Ethics and preparing disciplinary rules and regulations for its implementation;
- Judicial Inspectorates are closer to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will clarify the roles of the Inspectorates and foster better cooperation in the process of judicial inspection;
- The Citizen Advocacy Office (CAO) entered a partnership with Transparency International (TI) which leaves the office poised to have even greater impact against corruption in Albania;
- Increased public awareness on domestic violence;
- Increased knowledge of judges and other legal professionals on the new family law and anti-trafficking.